

earning induction into the Roanoke College Athletic Hall of Fame in 1998. To the benefit of many young people in the Roanoke Valley, these activities would remain important to him for the rest of his life.

After coaching at Bassett High School from 1978 to 1980, he arrived at Cave Spring High School to teach American history and government and coach boys and girls outdoor track and field, indoor track, and cross country. He loved the topic of American history as well as local stories of the past, portraying western Virginia founding father Andrew Lewis on a number of occasions.

As a student, Joe set several school cross country or track and field records, and as a coach for a combined 31 seasons, he stood out as well. In 1980, he helped David Garlow win the Virginia High School League (VHSL) Group AAA boys cross country individual championship. He also coached future National Football League players Ronde and Tiki Barber. His record at Cave Spring earned him six coach of the year honors.

Joe retired from teaching in 2013, but he continued as a USA Track & Field and VHSL official and participated in the Star City Striders, a local running group. He was also on the Eagle Scout Board of Review. I shared several interests with Joe and join with many in the Roanoke Valley who will miss this outstanding educator and coach and good man. He is survived by his wife Terry; daughters and sons-in-law Jackie and John Downs and Cathy LaRocco and Jeff Black; granddaughter Brigid Downs; and brothers Jim LaRocco and wife Sharon and John LaRocco. I offer them my condolences on their loss.

TRIBUTE IN MEMORY OF BILL MARDIS

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2021

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the memory of my beloved friend, Bill Mardis, who was the longtime editor of the Commonwealth Journal in Somerset, Kentucky.

Though small in stature, Bill Mardis was a journalism giant in Somerset, wielding a mighty pen, a humble approach and a steel-trap mind. We first became friends in the 1970s, with shared roots in radio broadcasting and a zeal for history and politics. Our friendship never swayed Bill from asking tough questions and writing an occasional hard-hitting piece; still yet we maintained a mutual respect for one another at all times. He was a dearly loved, iconic member of the Lake Cumberland region and his life's work kept all of us more informed. If a story had heart and soul, it was undoubtedly penned by Mardis. His signature "Humble Reporter" satire series also provided much-needed comic relief to the seri-

ous nature of the daily news covering the rest of the pages. In person, Bill also brought a unique and jovial interview style to every situation, while remaining fair, straight-forward and balanced through-out his career spanning nearly six decades.

Bill was known for his stellar work ethic, often putting in 12-hour work days to publish an accurate, reputable newspaper. In recent years, our interviews would occasionally linger an hour or more as we drifted off topic and reminisced about our mutual friends and mentors who were instrumental to the growth and progress in southern Kentucky, from the late U.S. Sen. John Sherman Cooper to the late Pulaski Circuit Judge Roscoe Tartar, and others. He kept a tight grip on the political pulse of the Lake Cumberland region, cultivating a trusted network of friends across party lines, lending to his rich, in-depth reporting.

May his legacy of balanced and fair journalism live on at the Commonwealth Journal where he dedicated nearly 60 years with the utmost integrity. My wife Cynthia and I send our heartfelt condolences to Bill's family, his coworkers at the newspaper, and his expansive community of friends. In the words of our satirical Humble Reporter, "I ain't never seed nothin' lak hit" and I don't suspect we ever will again.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF PEORIA POLICE CHIEF LOREN MARION III

HON. DARIN LaHOOD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2021

Mr. LAHOOD. Madam Speaker, I would like to honor and congratulate Police Chief Loren Marion III on his retirement from the Peoria Police Department after 26 years.

Loren Marion was hired as a Police Officer by the City of Peoria on October 3, 1994. During his career, he worked in Patrol, on the Community Area Target Team, the Street Crimes Unit, the Vice and Narcotics Unit, and the Target Offender Unit. Chief Marion also held the collateral duty of Task Force Officer with the Drug Enforcement Administration. On November 14, 2018, he was selected as Police Chief of the Peoria Police Department. Before working for the City, Chief Marion also served on active duty with the Army Military Police.

During his time with the Peoria Police Department, Chief Marion has been recognized with numerous awards and accolades for his service and exemplary professional performance. In 2008, Loren was named "Officer of the Year" and awarded the American Legion Meritorious Service Award. Chief Marion was known for his dedication to his fellow officers and he established an Officer Wellness program that provides peer to peer support as well as a Police Chaplain that assists officers who have been exposed to trauma.

In May of 2019, under Chief Marion's leadership, the Peoria Police Department became fully accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies due to the improvement of community and police relations, policies and procedures, management, operations, and support services.

Chief Marion has always been committed to his work and his community. It is my privilege to congratulate Chief Marion on his service to the Peoria Police Department. We have all been blessed to have Chief Marion serving and protecting us. The City of Peoria is a better place because of his service.

HONORING THE LIFE OF RICHARD S. PEPPER

HON. DARIN LaHOOD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 2021

Mr. LAHOOD. Madam Speaker, I would like to honor and remember the life of Richard Pepper, who passed away peacefully on January 28, 2021, at the age of 90.

Born in Barrington, Illinois in 1930, Richard, at an early age, displayed natural gravitation towards construction and philanthropy. Richard began his career working as an estimator for Pepper Construction in 1957. Soon after marrying his beloved wife, Roxy, Richard assumed leadership of the company after the sudden passing of his father, Stanley Pepper. Despite his young age, Richard showed the maturity and inclination to grow and foster the company and the ideals that his father had implemented. Under Richard's leadership, Pepper Construction strived to ensure their building decisions impacted the future to create a better quality of life for all.

Richard grew Pepper Construction into the nationally recognized construction firm known by so many across the Midwest. Richard held several leadership positions in the construction industry, including serving as president of the Associated General Contractors of America in 1983. He received the Jack Kinnaman Leadership Award from the American Institute of Constructors in 2015, which honors corporation leaders who have taken a visible leadership role in the American Institute of Constructors.

Richard's leadership at Pepper Construction has fostered a corporate culture that promotes community and industry involvement. During his time, Richard was well-known for his outspoken support of community improvement, advocating for bold initiatives, and striving to transform tomorrow.

We mourn the passing of Richard, a friend, and mentor to many. He left a lasting impact on those who had the pleasure of knowing him. May his memory be eternal.